

AT THE SHRINE
AND OTHER POEMS

GEORGE HERBERT CLARKE



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AT THE SHRINE

AND OTHER POEMS

By

GEORGE HERBERT CLARKE

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G. H. C.

*Knoxville, Tennessee,
May, 1914.*

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I.

AT
THE
SHRINE
AND OTHER POEMS

TO A FRIEND

THROUGH drenching deeps a ship is sailing,
A battered, broken journeyer;
And yet she keeps her course unfailing,—
A harbour waits for her.

Hope of that port her way doth order,
How far soever on the sea;
Ah, so thy heart, beyond the Border,
Beckons and governs me!

BOUNTY

A CHILD and a rose,
A rose and a child;
In the heart of the one repose,
And joy in the heart of the other!

A child and a friend,
And the rose changes hands;
In the heart of the man godsend:
Child, rose and white soul of his mother!

“A LIFE BEYOND?”

A LIFE beyond? Not mine the mournful cry!
O Hidden One, what holier mystery?—
Every morning we are born: every night we die.

DEUS INENARRABILIS

DID ever author pen a book
That *all* his spirit's fibre took?—
The Word of God was never writ
That men might make a Book of it.

THE LAST DESIRE

FROM dreamless nights to wake to mocking morrows,
To make toward the surface from the Deep,
For silence to put on old sins and sorrows,—
Unknown One, nay! let me forever sleep!

Secret, sufficient, all-subduing Sleep,—
In thine embrace eternal to be lying,
The while thine ancient eyes their vigil keep,—
How blest a thing to die, if this be dying!

THE DREAM OF DREAMS

"That the life of man is but a dream, many a man has surmised heretofore; and I, too, am everywhere pursued by this feeling."—Goethe: *The Sorrows of Werther*.

HOWEVER real it seem,
Sleeping we or waking,
Giving we or taking,
True, or all-forsaking,—
Life is a dream, a dream!

Shineth there a gleam
That gives it sudden sweetness,
Sadly we feel its fleetness,
Fading to incompleteness;—
Life is a dream, a dream!

Ah! when we would redeem
April from drear December,
Fresh fire from waning ember,
Why must we *then* remember
Life is a dream, a dream?

THE MOTHER

(She speaks, sitting up in bed:)

HARK, hark!
Did you not hear a sound from out the Dark—
A little, broken, uncontented cry?
(*Hush, darling, I am nigh!*)
The quick, bewildered walking mark you not,
The hands beseeching,
The white face stained with tears, the curls that
clot
The tiny brow, the mother-want past speeching?
Oh, can you see my baby frightened there,
And can you bear
To keep me from her? (*Sweetheart, wait for mother!*)
How may she find the way, uncomforted?
And how shall comfort come from any other
Save me alone? *The people there are dead!*

A PRIEST OF HUMANITY

OF SORROWS bitter-strange is wove his fate:
A mother weeping for her infant dead;
A father crying curses on the head
Of his wild son thrust forth degenerate;
The love that flamed, and faded to dull hate,
Of a wed pair that fain would be unwed;
A mind destroyed by the dark things it said;—
With these old woes his life is penetrate.

Yet for each alien anguish does he mourn,—
A sad compassion in his deepening eyes,—
Counsels, consoles, reveals “the better part;”
How great soever be the burden borne,
(Ah! this the secret of his ministries)
More bitter is the grief that eats *his* heart!

THE CHESS-PLAYER

I PLAYED at chess with Lasker, but to lose,
Beaten from the beginning; yet the game
Wavered awhile in seeming, and no shame
Possessed me. It was mine to check and choose,
To marshal, menace, try this sudden ruse
And that side-ambuscade, with hope aflame
Hailéd to be as he that overcame,
The laurel *once* at least not to refuse.

Vainly! He sat before me patient, still,
His dark eye searching out each secret plot,
And by his brooding, stern-compelling will
The game was guided, though I knew it not;—
Yet find I strength in failure as in strife:
As I played Lasker, so I challenge Life!

CHILDWIST

RAPT dreamer, what revealments dost thou see?
We that are blinded with the vagrant dust
Of our long way, and stifled by each gust
That stills the spirit when it moves too free—
So tired we are we turn ourselves to thee
Whose eyes are wide with wonder, and whose trust
Feels Something, Somewhere, that is kind and just,
Ancient and vast in its Eternity.

Ah, vain! Youth's vision only youth may learn;
Thou, too, dear maiden, must arise and seem
A destined path to tread, the while thine eyes
Gaze troubled, and the hardlier discern
The glory dimmed and gone;—O then thy dream
Still silent cherish till the daylight dies!

DAS EWIG-WEIBLICHE

LAST night I saw thee gliding to my bed
So gently, mother, to caress my brow
With all the old compassion,—“Darling, now
Is nothing wrong. Sleep, and be comforted!”
And I laid hold upon thine hand, and pled
Thou wouldst not leave me, till—I know not
how—

Buried in peace I slept, the while that thou
Wert there beside me, not among the dead.

I woke and found thee vanished, yet I feel
A sense that will not vanish of a hand
Still clasping mine, and on my lips the seal
Of a high matter, hard to understand,—
A touch, a kiss, a whisper'd word to me:
“Mother, and wife, and sister,—one in three!”

FACES

THERE are two pictures hanging on my wall:
One is the Woman of Dagnan-Bouveret—
Mary Madonna, with sad, dark eyes that say
Hidden and holy things, her peasant shawl
Folding her babe and breast; the other, call
“My Mother in Old Age,” gracious and gray,—
Hers is a lonely sleeping, long leagues away,
Nor can she hear her son’s prayers passional.

But sometimes the two faces dim and blur,
The darks and deeps are mingled, the lights turn
Trembling toward one another, and I see
Then, as with subtler vision, the eyes of her,
My mother, from the Virgin’s aureole yearn,
And Mary Maiden gray the mother of me!

THE HERETIC

HE GIVES to death world-prejudice. World-woe
Therefore upon its witless gods is crying
Never to spare, nor suffer more the lying
Counsels, contentions of this human foe:
It is not right that he should teach them so,
That worship of the runes is reason dying,
That for the spirit there is satisfying
Not in the formal Yea, but faithful No.

Aroused, those apathetic gods would hearken
What time they shook the stupor of the years,
And, making human lovelight droop and darken,
Crush out the rebel in a night of fears—
Not now, not now! Nay—they are gone abroad
To seek a truce of heaven with heaven's God.

THE CHIEF WITNESS

HER that hath hid a babe beneath her breast
Through the long, secret days and deepening
 nights,
 Kindling with happy hopes and dear delights,
Or brooding silent with a dim unrest,—
Ask *her*, the Mother, what is for women best,—
 The chase of phantom freedom, mechanic “rights,”
 Sharing with fevered face the cruder fights,
Or her high part in the Eternal Quest?

She only of her sex can say, for she
 Alone is Woman whose word is of a son:
 “In the great Heart-of-Things I feel a plan
Encompassing the mystery of me:
 I mother all mankind in mothering *one*,—
 Through me the race aspires from man to Man!”

THE SILENT SISTERS OF THE POOR

MEEKLY, with folded hands and patient brows,
Come two from out the ivy-clustered door;
A cross is on the altar of their House,—
It hushed their voices while it heard their vows;
Ay me,—the Silent Sisters of the Poor!

The cross upon the altar is of gold,
And coldly gleams in the chill chapel air;—
Is it for this their bosoms are so cold,
Nor beat as they were wont to beat of old?—
Or is a wintry cross enfixéd *there* :

The sun is dimly drooping down the west;
The ancient House against its glory stands
Sombre and gaunt and dark; and darkly drest,
Two figures seem to fade within its breast,
Meekly, with patient brows and folded hands.

PETRI INTERROGATIO

(After Dante Gabriel Rossetti)

"DILIGIS Me, Simon Joannis?"
 'Etiā, Domine,"
Petrus ait, "Tu scis quia
 Amo Te."

"Pasce agnos,
 Pasce," dicit,
"Agnos Meos!"

"Diligis Me, Simon Joannis?
 Diligis Me?"
"Immo vero; Tu scis quia
 Amo Te."

"Pasce agnos,
 Pasce," dicit,
"Agnos Meos!"

"Amas Me, Simon Joannis?
 Amas Me?"
Tristi sane corde Petrus:
 "O Domine,
Omnia Tu nosti; certe
 Amo Te."

"Pasce oves,
 Pasce," dicit,
"Pecudes!"

“WANGA NZAMBI, WANGA?”

(It is the custom of the Bakongo natives to end a speech by saying “Wanga,” a word signifying: “Do you understand?”)

A little African boy, brought up in the Mission, prayed that he might always have plenty to eat, that he might never have any work to do, that he might have fine clothes to wear, and that when he grew up he might attain the social standing of the white man. Then said he at the end of his heartspoken prayer: “Wanga Nzambi, Wanga?” meaning: “Do you understand, God,—Do you understand?”—Herbert Ward: *A Voice from the Congo.*)

O WARM Upleaping, swift Flame-Flowing,
That blesseth and banneth the eager hand,
Driving the Dark, yet into Darkness going,—
Lord Fire, dost understand?

O radiant Lighter of the Life of Day,
Regally coursing it along the sky,—
Sun-God, to Thee we lift our hearts and pray:
O hear us, or we die!

Great Father Zeus, mighty among the mighty,
Stern of Thy thought, severe of Thy command,—
Tyrant of Cronos, Hera, Aphrodite,—
Hearken, and understand!

Hakeem! that vanished in the sunset glory,
When to Thy faithful shalt Thou reappear?
Long have we brooded Thy celestial story,
Waited Thee many a year.

Mary, immaculate, humanity's one Mother,—
Thou in the Presence that dost intercede,—
Minister Thou (nor have we any other)
To our so bitter need!

Centre of Cosmos, what Thou art who knoweth?
Whether the worlds and we are nobly planned,
Or whether ebbing tide and tide that floweth
Eterne shall change, and Being *never* groweth,—
O who may understand?

DAY'S END IN DURHAM

IN the Abbey at Durham,
With its great stony Silence,
Builted of silences,
I bowed me and knelt.

After a long time
I prayed to the Silence
To enter my spirit,
And give me to know.

And the dim-sweeping arches
And solemn spaces,
Deepening, darkening,
Regarded the mortal,
The humble human,
Kneeling there, praying.

At last spake the Silence,
Silently, after its wont:

“We columns and cloisters
Are very ancient;
The tale of our years
Is nearing a thousand;
Once it resounded—
Our vast-flung vaulting—
With glory and passion

To the chants of our masters,
Your fathers long vanished;
Now we are dreaming
Of memories only:
Alike they and we
Are sinking to ruin.
Slowly to death,
Reluctant or willing,
Must all things yield them."

And the darkness deepened.

"Slowly to death,"
Were the words re-echoed,
"Must all things yield them."

And while I knelt there,
Unfolded a vision:
Before me was tending
The Earth in her orbit,—
An old pulsing planet,
Blind beating the void;—
And out of her bosom,
With castles and palaces,
Prisons and temples,
Crumbling upon it,
There came the old sorrow:
"Slowly to death
Must all things yield them."

“Customs and continents,
The secret-souled ocean,
Wars and war’s rumours,
Men’s poetry and music,
Their quarrelling systems,
Their sure revelations
Of the Made and the Maker,
The counters they trade in,
Their greeds and red rivalries,
Brave bursts of brotherhood,
Kindliest ministries,
Woosings and marryings,
Their ventures victorious,
Their gloomy forebodings,—
All shall decay and pass
Down to oblivion,
With me, their old Mother,
The Ruin they dwell on.

“All they are, all they have,
All they think or imagine,
Can little avail them
In the blind end of being;—
They are midges that hover
By my withering bosom,
And I but a midge
On the breast of Eternity!

“On the breast of Eternity!”
She spake, and was silent,
Save for the sudden

Tremor that shook her:
"Ah! what is Eternity?
Is It, too, a Ruin?"

In the Abbey at Durham,
With its great stony Silence,
Builded of silences,
I wondered, and woke.

A VOICE TO THE DYING

UNKNOWN and uncounted the years thou hadst
lain in my bosom

Ere thou wast born,—

Thou, and the wife thou hast loved, the dog thou
hast fondled,

The trees and the grasses by which thou hast lived;
A dim, ageless travail brought ye all forth,
And quiet hath been your mothering.

A quiet mothering,—

Yet have mine eyes not ceased from beholding thee,
Thee and all thy ways, — thine eager pride, and thy
powers

That failed thee, thy yeas and nays and silences,
Thy reckoned gains, thy mad revolts, thy crowding
sorrows,

Confessions sad;—all these thy mother's eyes have
seen.

Come home,—

Thou who hast never been far from me, for all thy
thinking,

'Thy little human tragedy—come home, dear child!
Beneath my breast come slumber once again,
Peradventure again to be born, again to die,
But never to be parted from her that bids thee come!

ON A FRIEND'S DEATH

W*E thought that Death was hard and harsh, a Doomer of
dread power;—*

Ah no! his wings wave gently as the petals of a flower.

What hath he done? Why have we watched and
wept?

He touched our friend's tired eyelids, and he slept.

What hath he taken? Not the kindly smile,
The sterling worth, the wisdom without guile.

How hath he wronged us? Still we have our friend;
For love and trust there cannot be an end.

Who mourneth overmuch, and murmureth?
The Soul that made shall care for him in death.

The mortal in him slept, th' immortal changed;
Over the hills of heaven he hath ranged,—

A boundless country, and a beautiful;
And Death its usher is and sentinel,
Who seals the eyes of them he loveth well
(And *all* he loveth well!),
Till they have journeyed whither they may not
tell,—

A boundless country and a beautiful!

Ah, what their secret? Why does none return?
Their Mentor Death hath won them, long they
learn.

Gladly they wander with him far and high;—
Death's Love's disguise to all of them that die.

*We thought that Death was hard and harsh, a Doomer of dread
power;—*

Ah no! his wings wave gently as the petals of a flower.

AT THE SHRINE

*M*ARY, *humanity's Woman, immaculate Mother,*
Is it Thou, Thou alone, that art pure, and never another?

For the babe at my breast many deaths did my body
endure:

The girl died, the virgin,—yea, all that the Past
counted pure.

Then the deepest last dying, the shudder so woeful
and wild,

The smothering darkness . . . the pitiful cry of
the child!

O Mary, the bliss that came after,—the *rapture* of
bliss,—

How I would laugh him to laughter, and how we
would kiss!

How I would clasp him in terror when trouble would
linger and stay!

Trouble? for any but him, my masterful man-child
alway.

How he would lie in my bosom, and how I would
breathe his name,

How I would watch him and love him and dream of
his lordly far fame!

'T was a wraith, a mistake,—'t was not *I* that lived
there in the Past,
A pale, futile girl,—now a woman, a woman at last!

For how could she know, that pale one, so saintly and
so clean,
That Madonna dwells eternal in the breast of Mag-
dalene?

*Mary, humanity's Woman, immaculate Mother,
Is it Thou, Thou alone, that art pure, and never another?*

“YONDER HE LIES”

YONDER he lies,—
My best of friends,
His faithful eyes
Filled with a tragic wondering surmise.

The days flash by—
The fields, the woods—
When he and I
Looked out on life and had no thought to die.

We did not need
Whistle or whine:
It seemed indeed
What nature wrote upon us each could read.

So word or bark
Broke seldom out,
Save when at dark
Each for his comrade's signal stood ahark.

He does not move,
But looks on me
As he would prove
The virtue of our old sufficient love.

Dear God, to sit
And watch his eyes!
Whose law is it,—
Whose justice issues this tremendous writ?

My dog, my friend,
Look up once more!—
Is this the end? . . .
As thou hast loved me, Love thy soul defend!

A WINTER TWILIGHT

THE year has reached December days,
The fire is creeping into flame;
Gently I call my comrade's name,
And silent both we sit at gaze.

His head is prest against my knee,
My hand upon his brow is set,—
The flames spring upward, and we let
Our fancies play with all they see.

I see the face of one who died
Ere the low whisper she had heard
That sought the moment and the word
To woo the maiden for my bride.

He sees a strange, enchanted land
That wanes and waxes with the flame;
He does not sense himself the same,
And dimly deems I understand.

My listless form yields slowly down;
He also droops with half-closed eyes,
Yet with a mute regard that tries
To feel his master's smile or frown.

On her dear face a pensive smile,—
The fire sinks low, and I repose;
The mystery of Wyrð who knows?
Are these *real* hours we beguile?

I cannot answer, yet am blest;
And from the hearth he turns his eyes
Till they meet mine in trustful wise,
And so he dreams himself to rest.

QUO ABEO?

THE flood flows down, the sails are spreading,
The destined voyage must begin;—
A quiet farewell, and then, undreading,
I enter in.

But far at sea—"Sir Captain, shelter
Awaits us whither? What harbour saves?"—
Nor sound nor motion but the welter
Of heavy waves.

"Yet tell me—there shall be an ending?
Some port with hope of us is lit?
Within *some* haven we find friending?
Ah! teach me it!

"Captain, . . . these seas . . . are not un-
charted?
We voyage not in blind amaze,
Growing forever fainter-hearted,
Unending days?"

No word—until I fall entreating:
"If here we wander evermore,
If there shall never be a meeting
Again, ashore—

“Oh, why the vessel, why the sailing?—

Sink we to rest beneath the sea,
Unsought, unlonging, unavailing,
No more to be!”

Silence—that stings me with the daring
To spring and seize that Shape unknown:
O God—’t is *I* with whom I ’m faring
Alone, alone!

ANTINOMY

THERE is no truth!

If here it ever dwelt, now it is dead;
Cant and shrewd Custom flourish in its stead;—
There is no truth!

Her heart is holy-pure, and speaketh very sooth.

There is no health!

For all men with a sore disease are smit,
Past help or hope, and all men die of it;
There is no health!

Her broken body shineth with unimagined wealth.

There is no light,—

But doubt, and secret dread, and shadow-dreams;
Woeful we wander, following phantom gleams;—
There is no light!

And yet a homelit haven unfoldeth to her sight.

There is no faith!

Our sages disavow the ancient tales,
Holding that when the breath fails, being fails;
There is no faith!

Let them persuade themselves! It is not so she saith.

There is no love,—

But only vanity, or passion, or pretence,
Self-interest, instinctive social sense;—
There is no love!

This evil thing ye publish her woman-eyes disprove.

ON MY DOG'S DEATH

MY FRIEND has gone
Through the door of darkness;
Wearily waiting,
He fainted and fell
Upon its threshold,
And ghostly fingers
Out of the silence
Laid hold upon him
And drew him through.

He did not know
The subtle secrets
Of Death the wary;
Deeply he loved me,
My little comrade,—
His eyes were shining
With lights of worship,
Of modest wonder,
When I caressed him.
Even at the last,
Before the darkness,
He never doubted:
He thought his lord
Was tired or troubled,
But would surely save him.

Thy lord? Ah, comrade,
Futile thy faith!

And futile my will
To heal and keep thee!
We dwelt together
As midges merely,
Afloat in the fathomless
Dust of the ages.

Drifted we near
Unto each other,
Enjoying the sunlight
Playing upon us;
And then, on a sudden,
Came the chill glooming,
The separation.

And yet . . . I feel . . .
There are strange things about love:
Love is so loving,
So patient, enduring,
Through the doom of defeat
And utter sorrow!
There are strange things about love . . .
I feel their strangeness.

Love may be somehow
More great than the midges,
Greater than ages,
Than loss and heartbreak
And death and distance,
Greater perhaps
Than It that orders
The swing of the planets,
Than all things else
That are or shall be.

The love I bear thee,
My little dead comrade,
Forever is trying
To tell me something.

I am learning to listen.

THE AMERICAN BLACK

(A Study in Race-Consciousness.)

NIGHT! Night!
And of the dawn no promise. Wrong is right,
And right is wrong!

Long, long ago, ah long,
I roamed the forests vast and awful, bending
Around me with their leafy aisles unending,
And smelt their dense sweet savours many a league,
And fought or loved their Shadows silent-striding
Without a fear; or, when a hard fatigue
Befell, would sink to utter sleep, confiding
In the fierce gods o' the Jungle I confest;
Ah, that delicious, peaceful, dreamless rest!

No hubbub of the kraal-folk now I hear,
No spear-songs, no war-music wild and thrilling;
Not now I shoot the arrow, hurl the spear,
And rush with warrior-rage unto the killing;—
The Old is dead,
Or, if it live perchance,
It dwells in the so distant battle-dance
Unfindable again, and poisoned lance
With foe's blood wet and red,
That into Past and Place its ghost has vanished.

Instead,—

Instead,—

White faces, houses, streets; white ways, white works;

Faces that frown and yet are not unkind,
Faces that smile where yet no kindness lurks,
(The gods were angry or were gracious, one!)

Houses that wear a shutter and a blind,
Streets all alike, and work that 's never done—
Work endless, pitiless, that craves and craves
Slaves for its worshippers, themselves its slaves:
Work without aim or meaning, save to breed
Money, the mother of more work, and greed,

Its father; work whose drudging devotees
Bear heavy loads with harness on their back,
The white men's golden, and we black men's black,
And *none* has joy or ease:

The poor seek riches, and the rich seek more,
And both must have our service, hard and sore;—
And so we serve and share not, nor rebel,
(For one must suffer when he is in hell)
And wear the yoke with silent, sullen shame,
And dream of Freedom that is not a name.

LA PUCELLE DE VERCHÈRES

NAME of Heaven! "No woman," you say, "may be
brave with the courage of man;
She may suffer with patience, endure; but let him *en-*
counter who can!"

Ah, but, my friend, it is idle, for how should you know
what you say?

The Maid, you will have it, is liker Our Lady,—we
kneel to and pray,—

La Sainte Vierge,—liker Her spirit, than they that must
wandering go

Down the way of the woman in silence, whether for
welfare or woe . . .

I know not;—Our Lady was silent; not seldom the
Maid was withdrawn,

Ahark for the voices that whispered through the night
and the dawn.

But to me was it shown,—I have seen and 't is mine
to declare

What the soul of a woman may do in the hour of dark-
est despair.

Just fourteen years had she, no saint, but of Canada's
breast,—

A girl in her fibre-of-fear, yet a general true to the test.
No saint? *Mais non!* The good God knoweth no angel
so fair

As she that dwells pure in His heaven now,—Madeleine
de Verchères!

Verchères was unguarded, look you, the Seignior on
duty away,
And Madame at Montreal, and the people afield for
the day,—
The twenty-second October, Sixteen Hundred, Ninety-
Two,—
And Madeleine stayed at the landing-place, expecting
my canoe;
For I brought in supplies for the fort each day, or shine
or rain,
Wresting its good from the forest-soil;—one needed
Pierre Fontaine;
And I knew the need, and met it, and was making ready
that morn,
When suddenly in my bosom the sense of fear was
born;—
Ah God! that cry of anguish, ever it echoes to me,
As I saw the Iroquois fiends of hell beginning their
butchery.
They had stolen upon the settlers, and were scalping
them in the fields,
Fifty savages red with blood. “‘T is now that Verchères
yields,”
I thought; “It is time to die,” but I ran for my canoe,
And into it urged my dear ones, and waited what to do;
Ma foi! it was hard to know, but my heart for joy gave
a leap
When I saw little Madeleine running,—not *her* had
they caught asleep;
She was in the fort, and the gate was shut, and the
breaches all repaired

Ere the enemy could enter, though he came as near as
he dared,
Leaping, and yelling his frightful yells, and waving in
the sun
The dripping spoil of his human hunt;— Sacred Name,
—that it should be done!

There were only three men in the fort, and none of
them could fight,
For one was weary for the grave, and the rest no men
aright;
But Laviolette, who gave the alarm and entered with
her the gate,—
Let him be named as a brave man there who bravely
faced his fate;—
He it was told me after of the craven soldier pair
That Madeleine found in hiding and drove to the open
air;
He it was told me her saying to her brothers young but
true:
“We must fight to the death for God and country. I
count on you.
Remember, our father has taught you that gentlemen
are born
To shed their blood for God and the king. Let our
name sustain no scorn!”

For me and mine, the Indians had seen us at last, and I
knew
That the one hope left was to reach the fort, and I sud-
denly turned the canoe

To the landing-place, and tore the water, paddling for
life or death,
When all at once I saw a sight that made me catch my
breath;—
'T was Madeleine coming from the fort alone, to meet
and bless,
And the Iroquois stood stupid,—stark images, no less!
For they feared it meant a sortie, and they stood and
watched us feign,
And fired no shot, till they saw the gate swing open and
close again.

And the night fell on us, and a storm swept down,—
wind and snow and hail,—
And the spirits of all were darkened, and some began
to quail;
But the maid she showed no sign of dread, and a cheer-
ful tone she chose:
“Until this moment the hand of God has saved us from
our foes.
Now let us have courage and ward them off, whate'er
may hap to-night.
Gladly will I command the fort, and the six who can
shall fight.”
The soldiers and I were to guard the blockhouse, with
orders clear,
And she placed the boys on the bastions,—good lads
that had lost their fear,—
And the agéd man and the child herself made up the
sentinel four,

And through the long night the cry "All 's well!" rang
out 'mid the storm's downpour.
And the enemy made no move, for he thought that our
few were a host,
But he bode his time, and our little band were be-
leaguered a week almost;
And if Madeleine ate or slept I know not, but this I
know,—
When I looked toward the bastion she was there; in
the blockhouse, there also;
Smiling, rallying, promising help, shaming and cheer-
ing us all,
With a gliding grace as sweet to see as though she were
leading a ball.
My friend, had Daniel beheld her, our maid in his wild
beast's den,
Rescue might come what time it would, how should it
matter when?
In a girl's young soul I had seen for a week the soul of
the human race,
And I longed to bear more and do more before I should
leave that place.

But the moment came—too soon it came,—our maid
was adozed, with her gun
Lying across her tired-out arms, for the day was spent
and done,
When some of us heard a sound below, down by the
riverside,
And instantly from the bastion "*Qui vive?*" a sentinel
cried;

And little Madeleine started up, and La Monnerie stood
without,—

With his forty fighting men come up to put the foe to
rout.

He praised her wit and her courage; right gallantly
did he bow;

But she smiled and said: "Lieutenant, to you we sur-
render now."

And we crowded round her to kiss the hand and have
the heavenly smile,

But she would not listen to our thanksgivings, and went
apart awhile.

Would she had grown a woman in years, for woman
she was in power!

But to test our own was Madeleine's soul lent us from
Heaven an hour.

II.

SERENADE

THE leaves in the shadow
And starlight are glistening;
Ahark is the darkness!—
Love, art thou listening?

Love, art thou listening? . . .
The night shall adore thee,
And, when we are parted,
The silence sing for me.

THE PERFECT COMRADE

THE perfect comrade says nothing, nothing,—
But her calm thoughts and pure
Make her brow as a cloudless sky,
With twin stars, shining serenely.

RENUNCIATION

I HAVE lost you, my friend,—
But my heart was your advocate, is to the end:
I, a woman, love utterly you, and if you have left me,
Not yours the blame of it, mine be the shame of it, or
indeed you 've bereft me!

THE MASTER-WOOER

I SAW thy heart to-day:
A rock against whose breast the ceaseless spray
Dashed itself into madness, woe and death,
Like one that all in vain beleaguereth.

Ah, but the *ceaselessness*!
The sea that dieth liveth none the less:
After a thousand years must come a day
The rock shall yield herself to him for aye.

TO AN UNNAMED LADY

WHEN there are others by, in vain I dream
To dwell within the orbit of thine eyes,—
Or should there dart a sudden starry gleam,
It hardly lives and lightens ere it dies.

But, sweetheart, how they “swim into my ken”
When we ’re alone,—how ruth and trust and
pride
Smile in their shining depths! Amen, Amen,—
For here th’ eternal mysteries abide!

THE TWO FLOWERS

HELEN wore it in her hair,
That little fragile flower,
Wore it for an hour,—
Then she laughed and gave it me to wear;—
No little flower so holy anywhere!

Fate looked and found my Helen fair,—
That little fragile flower,—
Spared her but an hour;
When she died the dayspring vanished there;—
No little flower so holy anywhere!

THE RETURN

HELEN softly stole to me just now,
Smiled and chided while she smoothed my brow:
 “Why so still and serious?
 Please do n't be mysterious!
Laugh and love and let us both be gay!”

The shadow stirred and vanished; life was lit,
Quick ecstasy irradiating it;—
 Ah, how I sprang to clasp her hand!
 Hardly yet can I understand;—
Helen died a year ago to-day.

SEA-SECRETS

LITTLE one, woman-one, whither are you sailing?
From far at sea your slender craft is heading for the
 haven,—
But harbour 's here, and harbour 's there, and all
 unavailing
Are the eyes that strain to see your course, the lips
 to give you hailing;—
Homing one, flash it me,—whether for woe or bliss:
Is my heart your haven, or his?

Little one, woman-one, I fear me he is dreaming,—
 Young Cupid at the wheel there, so carelessly he
 turns it;
Whisper to him, tell him you are tired of seeming,
That you in port would be, beyond the fitful waters'
 gleaming;—
Come, then, a sea-secret! Silently breathe me this:
Is my heart your haven, or his?

TRYST

I THOUGHT to have made her my bride,
And now she is dead;
Death holds her close by his side
In his earth-dark bed.

Not a murmur, a motion, a breath!—
In vain does he woo:
Being dead, yet she yields not to Death;—
Endlessly true!

She knows that I need her now
All else above:
She will come to me; when and how
We leave to Love.

TO LAURE

LAURE, when I look on thee
My heart 's the heart of youth;
Thy sweet simplicity
Endowers *me* with truth:
Then never must we part,—
Thyself my spirit art.

When thy soft eyes on me
With maidenwist are turned,
In their pure depths I see
Where love may best be learned,—
From lesser love, sweetheart,
Thyself my saviour art.

Laure, till I looked on thee
The man I was was no man,
High faith and honour free
Won me when I won woman:
Thou dost redeem my heart,
And still its sovran art.

DELIA AND I

DELIA and I are driving alone,—
 Driving, driving;
Sleepily jogs the reliable roan,
And over the meadows the blossoms are blown,
And the song of the thrush finds an echoing tone—
 Shriving,
Shriving my soul to be clear as her own.

Delia and I are moving content,—
 Moving, moving;
And few words are spoken, but many are meant;
She smiles at the sunshine, on *her* I'm intent,
And still through the wood steals the jessamine
 scent,
 Proving,
Proving our hearts and laughing at Lent.

Delia and I are turning toward home,—
 Turning, turning;
The stars are alight in the infinite dome,—
The field-hues have faded to glimmering chrome,
The moon-ship is launched from horizons of loam;—
 Learning,
Learning the roads that lead lovers to Rome!

THE WINE OF LOVE

THE wine of love,—a wingéd wine,
Crushed from the warm, incarnadine,
Deep breathless sunset, and compounded
With star-songs in the midnight sounded;
Vivid as the summer lightning,
Still glowing, paling, fading, bright'ning;
O wonder-wine, thy cup I covet,
Nor linger long my lips above it!
What matter though the draught destroy
The sober mind and dull employ?
What matter all the ancient tasks?—
To live, to live, my spirit asks:
Content no more with placid quiet,
But, kindling with the race and riot
Of the swift-enchanting potion,
To enter earth's supreme emotion;
Its pains I dare, its farthest fortunes
I'll compass, as a *king* impórtunes!
The wine of love—a warrior-wine—
I quaff, and all the world is mine.

SECOND THOUGHTS

WAS it I who dreamed
In the doubtful Dark
That distant gleamed
A kindling spark?
Was it I who sought it
And found its flame,
And seized and brought it
The way you came?

Was it I who bowed
And held the fire?
Was it you whose proud
Regard drew nigher?
Was it your torch took
Sudden light from mine,
And your radiant look
That I drank like wine?

Or, did you pass
Serene and still,—
No smile, alas!
On those lips so chill;
Your torch unlit,
And the Dark about,—
Sole light in it
Fast flickering out?

Nay, dying not,
 Though its flame must be
By fated lot
 Unpassed to thee;
Though the Dark be dark,
 One torch may prove
A meeting-mark
 In the Endless, love!

“UNTIL DEATH US DO PART”

SHE never meant to leave me so
Who dowered me with Love's estate,
And taught my troubled soul to know
Redemption in the woman-mate:
Yet every day, although she smiled,
She moved about so slow and mild.

I heard a whisper in the air,
And felt at times a furtive touch,—
It followed me upon the stair,
And gloomed my doubtful spirit much:
But when my fear I breathed to her,
She murmured: “Nay, I love you, dear!”

And then her hand in mine was laid
And we sate silent through the night,
And though *It* stirred, were not afraid,
But waited for the morning light,
And thought that life was hers and mine,
That God was good, and Love divine.

Ah then, even then, the look of pain,
And peace, and sorrow on her brow!

And never does she speak again,
Nor clasp me any longer now:
Death, who may hope to rival thee,—
False Death, that stole her hence from me?

LOVE'S SIMILITUDES

IN vernal grove a poplar slim
Queening it over every tree,
Lithest grace in girth and limb,
Slender little sovereign she;—
A feeble trope, a whilom whim,—
No poplar is a peer for thee!

Through azure air a soft young cloud,
Lit with the sun, and floating free:
About her all the heavens are bowed
To guard and keep caressingly;—
But nay, my lady Gracious-Proud,
How shall a cloud compare with thee?

On autumn nights the harvest moon
Touching with magic land and sea,
And in the hearts of men the tune
Of far, forgotten minstrelsy;—
Though shod with wandering music-shoon,
The mellow moon 's no match for thee!

Sweetheart, no longer I 'll essay
To seek thy like in cloud or tree
That come, and bless, and pass away,
Striving forever how to be;
For all my guardian-angels say
Perfection 's perfected in *thee*!

TO A YOUNG GIRL

DO not forget,
When you are old,
Margaret,
And I am—cold,
That long ago I was your loyal lover.

Two, when we met,
Were you,—no more,
Margaret;
And I—twoscore;
Far in the past, those sunlit days are over,—

Those days God let
Shine pure and bright,
Margaret,
When man and mite
Merrily played amid the summer clover.

My sun has set
That yours might rise,
Margaret;
Now all men's eyes
Rejoice your radiant beauty to discover.

And yet, and yet
My soul says slowly:
"Margaret
Does not forget!
Her child-heart holy
Once and for aye enshrined you as her lover."

WAITING

AGAIN, a song!
Would *he* be silent? Silence and doubt are wrong.
It is not long. . . . No. . . . No, it is not
long. . . .
Even now his sturdy wings must beat toward
home and me.

Oh, let me sing
As though my notes he waited, listening
Somehow amazed;—let his mate's music bring
His erring flight to yearned-for rest, unerringly!

Hark! . . . 'T is not yet, . . .
But I am happy; 't is not meet to fret. . . .
Am I not happy? The sun is well-nigh set,
And soon, and soon he homes him to the old beech
tree.

Yes, soon! . . . Yes, soon! . . .
Another . . . might be . . . lying dead, the
wind a-croon;
Broken his wings, unheeding sun or moon. . . .
But not my love; my strong one cometh back to me.

Dear love, do not,
(If thou art hiding near the trysting-spot)
Do not delay, though sweet the little plot! . . .
I wait, and oh, sing as I may, Fear also waits for
thee.

All song is done. . . .
Shrunk to nothing is the shameful sun;
And out the stars are coming, one by one. . . .
And in the cold night lies my life, under a beechen
tree!

AT PARTING

THE night is silent, love, and here beside thee,
Holding the hand that is not now denied me,
I too am still; how shall I say farewell?

No words have we, and yet the summer weather,
Lulling the garden, gathers *us* together,
And mingles us with myrrh and asphodel.

Was there a time before that time, I wonder,
When something flashed and rent the veil asunder,
And visions faded and the Truth befell?

And now, because thou *art* the Truth, I'll grieve
thee
No longer by forbearing to believe thee,
Though I am sent upon a sorrow-spell.

How long the way thou sayest not, but only
That I must tread it loyally and lonely,
Unheeding whether heaven wait, or hell.

Why this must be I cannot know, beloved,
But thou dost know, and, howsoe'er removéd,
Some day, perchance, the secret thou wilt tell.

Nothing I ask; how shall the Truth be bounded?
I leave thee, yet by thee I 'm still surrounded:
The sea's voice sounds about the farthest shell.

The moonlight deepens, love, and grows to golden,
And thou and I in it are strangely holden;—
Ah, holy, holy moment of farewell!

THE NOVICE

SHE had a lover in the world,
A lover wooing her to wed;
“And does he live, or is he dead?”

She knows not, but she bows her head,
And broods upon the blessed beads,
And spends the day in holy deeds.

“Mary, for one,” she intercedes,
“Who is not good, thy grace I crave;
Madonna, grant his soul to save!

“He is not good, but, ah! so brave,
And strong, and tall, and careless-glad—
Careless and proud, my lover-lad!

“Madonna, I am very sad;
I do not know, I cannot hear—
And once I held him passing dear.

“O Mother, let me breathe my fear
Into your bosom true and pure:
I am not sure! I am not sure!

“ ‘To wed the Christ shall be my cure,’
I thought: ‘I must no earthly love,
But fix my heart on Him above.’

“Bear witness, Mary, how I strove
To melt his image into thine,
And thy dear Son’s, incarnadine!

“And wilt thou not bestow a sign?
May not my rebel heart be blest?
Or is ’t unworthy of thy rest?

“Here in the twilight I ’ve confest,
Mary, to thee alone—thou knowest
How I, among thy maidens lowest,

“How I, even I, adore; and owest
Thou not thy votary a grace?—
Once more, but once, to see his face!

“Mother, I clasp thy knees, embrace
Them, kiss them, in abandonment!
But once—and I shall be content!

“Too weak and wrong for thine assent?
Nay, Mary, she was not a nun
Who bore thee, and who yearned to *one*.

“And thou thyself didst bear a Son
(Whose name be praised!)—Saint through and
through,
O Mary, thou ’rt a woman, too!”

A GIRL'S COMPLAINT TO HER HEART

I FELT a breeze blowing upon my brow,
Beside the open window as I lay,
And dreamed it whispered: "Lo, the dawning day!
Awaken! for the winds are waking now."
A bird sang dimly from her swaying bough,
And in my dream I struggled to obey
The breeze and bird, and joy even as they
In the broad Sun,—and woke, I knew not how.

About my heart, too, hovers a waiting wind:
I would my heart would waken, but it seems
Stubbornly sleeping, careless of any cry;
I know it is not cruel or unkind,—
Yet if it rouse not from insensate dreams,
How may it hope for morning? It must die.

A SONNET OF SPOUSAL

OVER the mountain hangs the hush of dawn,
Irresolute to be or cease to be;
The mist-bathed valley and each lonely tree
Stretch motionless, as on a canvas drawn;
Afar, ahark, a flight-arrested fawn
Stands tense, th' eternal sacrament to see—
The quickened sky, that pulses tremblingly
Till red with day's-blood lighting hill and lawn.

So is it with the love that 's born in me:
Silent it waited, wavered; risen now,
The sky of life it climbs with steady power;
Sweetheart, its day is ours. Oh, may we see
Together its high noon, together bow
And worship in its holy evening hour!

AMOR SEMPITERNUS

WHEN first I found thee, Ruth, I thought: "How rare!"

As one with quiet pleasure may behold
A wildwood flower her fairy leaves unfold
Because a herald zephyr lingered there.
After a new adventure: "She had an air
Of mirth and mischief;" then—"With how controlled

And clear a vision she views the stars untold!"
Last, on a sudden: "God, how she is fair!"

When was the mystery that made thee mine?
What moment married us,—the first surprise?
The summing of thy linkéd lovelinesses?
Or the pang of passionate hope, desire divine? . . .
Ah none! We looked each other in the eyes,
Remembering a Chaos of caresses.

PAURA NON E NELLA CARITA

THE place, a Tuscan churchyard, and the time,
Languorous autumn, and late afternoon;
The silence of surrender; the solemn moon,—
Pale ghost of some unexpiated Crime,—
Viewing the sun's recessional sublime
Austerely; while the shadowy lagoon
Trembles along the surface, ceasing soon
As to the whisper of an alien clime.

But who are these, unheeding the chill gloom,
That move along the avenues of Death,
Or idly pause before some ancient tomb,
Where each, to hold the other, lingereth?
Ah, only lovers can bear the eyes of Doom,
And smile to hear the fatal words she saith!

THE FIREFLY

WHILE on my bed I lay, watching the night,
A sudden something flashed about the room,
At brilliant battle with the giant gloom,
Pulsating vividly,—a point of light;
A brigand with a bosom; a roving knight
Of old Romance, ready to reassume
The quest of Roland, and challenge Roland's
doom
In the dead Dark;—a firefly, fleet and bright.

So darts a tireless thought about my mind,—
Luminous, magic, passionate with joy,
Scourging and slaying the melancholy drove
That fear its power, as the dust the wind;
Within its heart of fire a wingéd boy
Compelling, and his radiant name is Love.

THE TRANSFIGURER

O SWEET to hear thy name on friendly tongue,—
But sweeter far to hear thee utter mine!
O joy to enter memory's secret shrine
And find thee thronéd sovereign saint among
All hopes and honours I have sought or sung;—
But greater joy to see the image shine
Of my sole self within thy tender eyne,
And lose the years, and share thy spirit young!

If this be selfish, dear, or selfish seem,
Let me confess my fault, and bear correction;—
And yet from penance may this plea redeem:
My name I love not, but as thou dost call,
Nor my presentment save in one reflection,
For thou art Love, and loved, and lover all.

“THE MOON, AND MY LOVE, AND I”

THE moon, and my love, and I;
A welter of clouds in the sky;
And the night-wind sighing by!

I turned to her and I said:
“Why are we yet unwed?
Soon the moment will have sped.”

Trembling, she touched my hand:
“How may you understand?
Is love a thing to be planned,

“Or its own sufficient light?
How the storm-clouds drive to-night!
Fearsome to me the sight!

“Can the moon be happy above,—
The moon, dear symbol of love?
She thrives not, where once she throve.

“Lover, I dread the maze
Of 'wilderer sorrow-ways
That may darken all our days.”

But I made answer to her:
“The moon is the happier
For the sky's strange strain and stir.

“She shines as she always shone,
And still reigns—she alone—
On her storm-besiegéd throne.

“Soon must the clouds subside;
Soon shall the wind have died;
Through a heaven new-glorified
Love’s majesty shall ride,—
God’s Moon, th’ eternal Bride!”

· · · · ·
A hush in the air,—no sound!
Somehow her hand I found;
The moonlight wrapt us round.

HER HEART BREAKS SILENCE

BECAUSE that thou art pale and cold and still,
I feel thy spirit, Winter, one with mine;
All times are sunlit saving only thine,
And all but thee the joys of life fulfill:
Sweet madcap Spring skips free from hill to hill,
And Summer's golden sap swells every vine,
The wine-dark eyes of Autumn brood benign
Through purpling ways upon the whippoorwill.

His note is silenced, gray and lonely ghost,
By thee alone; from thee the birds and streams
Shudder away for shelter, love thee not;
And the great Glory thou dost worship most
Withdraws his being, and averts his beams,
And leaves thee to thy melancholy lot.

He does not know the secret in thy heart,
And why thy face is pale he does not dream,
Nor yet how excellent thy sight would seem
If he approaching saw thee what thou art:
In his smile smiling, of his presence part,
By his warm radiance made to glow and gleam;—
Thy fruitful beauty straight becomes his theme,
And love his challenge is, and love his chart.

So, Winter, is it with the soul of me
My hero scorns so slight and frail to find—
And ever slighter while it waits unblest;—
O turn he but a moment, he should see
His own light in these eyes, to all else blind,
His holiest honour in this faithful breast!

“SHE IS NOT DEAD”

*SHE is not dead : it shall not be
That she has gone away from me
Into a stark Eternity.*

Her limpid eyes were large with ruth
And wonder; in her senses, youth,
And hunger in her heart for truth.

Ah, how she loved to watch them glide
So dreamily from side to side,—
The birds that but a summer bide;

And how she joyed in greening trees
And every saucy little breeze
That with her locks took liberties!

But if a shadow fell, and Pain—
My tireless harrier, unslain,
Unslayable—should strike again,

Child though she was, the mother-soul
Would rise within her, and would roll
The stone away, and make me whole.

So child and mother she, now wise
Beyond the books, while now surprise
And maiden-mischief lit her eyes;

Then dreamy as the birds that glide,
Her gaze would change; unsatisfied
And wistful would it wander wide,
Seeking the secret still denied
To mortals. . . . So, they say, she died.

*It is not true: it shall not be
That she has gone away from me
Into a stark Eternity.*

III.

“O EARTH, WHAT CHANGES!”

(Macaulay's New Zealander.)

HE climbed no more, but turned at dusk of day,—
A statued doom. At last he sigh'd and said:
“And this was London!” Died the word away,
Trembling to silence with that mighty dead.

THE EARTHQUAKE

A ROLLING, griding rumble: a sharp shudder;—
The earth in spasm!

A long multitudinous wail . . .

Sudden flames leaping; fingering, swallowing . . .
Dust and darkness!

AN OLD MASTER

I SAW a picture yesternight,
By a most ancient Máster done;
Ah me! its beauty smote so bright
I saw it, and—'t was gone.

Dark were the woods, and dark the plain,
And dark clouds drifted all about,
When from a storm-heart rent in twain
The white-pure Moon looked out.

THE TOUCH

AGE-OLD, age-silent, Nature queen,
Mindful of ancient vows,
Changeless, with finger sibylline
Touches once more the trembling treen:
Shyly and dreamily the green
Wavers along the boughs.

A LAKE SUNRISE

SHEATHED by the everlasting sky
That bends caressing from on high
In garments blent
Of white and blue,
And fairer, farther, fainter hue,
The silent lake lies musing and is well content.

Calm child-of-many-waters, dream!
Sudden across thy breast shall gleam
A wave-kissed way
Of floating gold,
Fixed skyward with a steadfast hold,
Whereon an angel lingering may kneel and
pray.

DAYBREAK

S*UN! Sun! Sun! Sun!*
Chorus of earth-birds, chorus of sky-birds, myriad
matins begun,
Cross-tangled adventurous music, anthems of awe,
Of appeal, adoration: litanies now of law,
And now raptured singings of trust in the truth of
the light,
The Lighter's proud power, and the rich-altared
East, all bedight
With the glimmer, the glow, and the glory, till it
mounts into flame,
And the mass-music mightily swells to the sovereign
Name—
Sun!
As his garment, incredibly golden, the edge of the
world has won,
And life is astir, and love is alive, and the sighing
and sleeping are done;—
Sun! Sun! Sun!

LES CAMARADES EN VOYAGE

THE vessel is restlessly rushing over the waters,—
But the moon is silent and still;
Hundreds of men and women are aboard,
Listlessly lounging, or sleeping, or chatting, or playing,—
But the moon is solitary;
The heart of the ship labours incessantly,
With fierce energy driving her forward, forward,—
Ever the effortless moon is astern;
The lights of the port shine out,
The passengers stir, show interest, crowd eagerly up,—
“We are arriving,” they say. “We have made a speedy voyage.”
And as they step upon the pier, lo the whiteness there!

TO NIGHT

COOLING, quieting Night,
Subtle abolisher of the long-burning light
Of Day; wrapt with thine ever-darkening hair,
Searching with agile, patient fingers everywhere
Lest in some undiscovered spot thy foe, reluctant,
 hideth;—
Mother, in whose deep bosom Sleep abideth,
Thy child and Death's, the gloomier Shade that
 glideth
Constantly after, stern husband-soul of thee,
Whom only thou regardest and dost not flee,—
O lead him soon to me,
That I too feel him Father, unfearing tread where
 he hath trod,
And be at one with the silent Three that brood and
 move in the Shadow of God!

A SUMMER NIGHT

SILENT the vast of night:
Silent the hills on horizons,
Low, dark, continuing;
Not a leaf is bestirred on the branches
By the wind, now hushed into nothing,
Or the careless, confident touch of a bird alighting;
Silent the rocks, sullen resisters;
Silent the waters,
Even the very young waves, the gentle rippling
washes of the slim sand's little lovers;
Very silent the moon, that rises and rises, dear
sorceress—
Never a whisper, a hint, yet the luminous, tremulous
path is forever
Turning and twinkling to me, appearing, evanishing,
Infinite points of light liquescent, sparkling and
darkling;
And I look at the hills and the trees and the rocks
and the waters,
And I look at the moon and the glorified path to
her glory,
And share my brothers' silence.

ARIEL'S REVENGE

IN olden time sprite Ariel would fly
To do his Master's bidding, far and high;
But that was ere Man looked at him askance,
And changed him to a shadow-of-romance.
Long Ariel endured his friendless fate,
But a strange miracle has happened late:
The restless prisoner has broke his span
And flown into the very heart of Man,
Making us mad our new-felt wings to try,—
We rise, we dive, we climb, we mount the sky!
Forgive us, Aviator Ariel,—
'T is *thou* hast freed *us*, and we love thee well!

THE AERONAUT

PÆAN, sing pæan!
For I have made me wings;
No more the empyrean
Withstands my journeyings;—
The empyrean,
Eternal, silent, vast!
I enter it at last,
And the god in me sings.

Power, sing power!
For I am greater grown;
This is the mighty hour
When all becomes mine own;—
The mighty hour
Dreamed, laboured for, fulfilled,
Won as my spirit willed,—
The firmament known.

Yet, in the singing,
Hearken a low, sweet cry:
“Wouldst thou, O Man, be winging
The stretches of the sky;—
Wouldst thou be winging
Thine ever-upward way,
Did not Love smile and say:
‘Thy courier I!’?”

A SETTLER'S GRAVE

FAR on the outflung headland thou dost lie,
Silent and lone, the lonelier for thy kin;
Here they have railed thy rotting tombstone in,
And here a thousand times they pass thee by.
Theirs the unwistful, unillumined eye,
To whom the earth is earth, who never win
A whisper'd word from heaven when suns begin,
But toil and sleep;—these live and thou dost die.

Or is it death to leave the ways of men
And lie upon the headland with no sound
Save for the brooding Love that covers glen
And lake and forest in its vast profound;—
While the gulls shrill their secrets to thy breast,
And in the boughs above the redbirds nest?

THE EYES OF THE EAST

I SING the East at sunset, the low East,
The lonely East, that is not looked upon;
Her glory hath departed, from her wan
And straitened eyes the stare is unreleased;
She sees the marriage and the marriage-feast,
The shameless ardour of the Bride o' the Sun,
The troubled yielding of the Captive One,
Who droops and wavers till his light hath ceased.

Still sits the East and broods across the earth
With fixed eyes: *Is motherhood in vain?*
And minds her of the marvel of his birth
And the long silences that spoke again;
Thus through the night she dreams; at dawn her
eyes
With awe are holden and with strange surmise.

A FOREST GRAVEYARD

THE birds brood silent in the underbrush,
A stricken ghostliness stands each stark tree,
The hesitating river glides less free,
Fearful of the inviolable hush;
Beyond the stream a solitary thrush
Sings, and the sun's deep crimson drapery
Is drooping o'er the land, but breathes to me
No hope the wintering shadows cannot crush.

I turn to go, and in the littered leaves
Stumble upon a shell, a shapeless stone,
A withered rose, huddled together there;
O secret grave, sure no sad mother grieves
The little ward of death thou guard'st alone:
Be I thy mourner, child, and thou my care!

SONG OF THE EVENING CLOUD

MOTHER, O mother, Moon my mother,
I hear your whisper over the sky,
Gentle its breathing as you draw nigh,
It is softer and sweeter than any other,—
The whistling sweep of the breezes keen,
The murmurous hum where the Sun has been,
Or the croon of the Night in her shadow-sheen;
Mother, O mother, Moon my mother,
Come, and my kisses shall smile and smother!

Mother, O mother, Moon my mother,
Why must you glide so swiftly by?—
Yet how pure is my life and my heart how high,
Higher this moment than any other!
While I clung to you, dear, and your word had
blest,
While your white spirit became *my* guest,
O the joy I felt to be so caressed;—
Mother, O mother, Moon my mother,
Brighten us, lighten us, brother and brother!

“BROWN FELLOW”

BROWN FELLOW, rusty fellow, better cease your wooing;

All Summer long your loves have laughed at your appealing glances.

Too whist you are, unkissed you are—yours is no way of doing;

For bright Lord Sun each leaf that blows be-dimples her and dances;

But you 've no share, mute surly Earth,
In this green and golden mirth.

Give o'er, give o'er,
Leaf-loves desire no more!

Brown fellow, rusty fellow, wise you are and patient;
Madcap Summer's day is done, and friendly
Autumn careth;

They stoop to you, they droop to you—what though
you 're dark and ancient—

The little leaves they lowly turn, each to your
bosom fareth,

And as it falls the tender hush
Of love and longing 's in its blush.

Amen to ye,
Your brides they all shall be!

“THE RAIN IT RAINETH”

TO green the grass,
And mud the road,
To run the lass,
And draw the toad,
The rain it raineth cheerily.

On ploughéd field,
And cistern dry,
On woods and weald
Lest saplings die,
The rain it raineth busily.

To stream the plains,
And scare the kine,
To bang the panes,
And drench the pine,
The rain it raineth wilfully.

Down to the sea,
Whose slumbrous waves
Insensate be,—
Dull-shining graves,
The rain it raineth mournfully.

OUTWARD BOUND

SAILING, sailing,
Over the waters and over the world,
High to the heaven our sheets unfurled;—
Hailing, hailing
Our Lord the Sun, our Lady Moon,
The starlit Night, the ardent Noon;—
Failing,
Paling,
To twilights breathless,
And dreamings deathless,—
And aft the Creole sailor's croon.

Leaping, leaping,
Quick with the quivering life of the Trades,—
On our bow grows the sea-line, to windward it
fades;—
Steeping, steeping
The good ship and her marineres
In sea-light, sea-dark, years and years;—
Creeping,
Sleeping,—
The Wind-God numbers
Our sudden slumbers,
Our eeriest fancies, strangest fears.

THE LAST LULLABY

THE shepherd moon mothers her shining sheep,—
The little stars that cluster close and deep;
And soon they sleep.

The flower's wings are folded to her breast:
She hears a whisper from the darkling west;—
How pure her rest!

Dim droop the drowsing birds upon the trees;
The boughs are still as they: no unquiet breeze
Troubles their ease.

The far and lonely waters feel the spell,
Whose monotones sound slowly out, and tell
Their sway and swell.

All nature is asleep and dreaming dreams
Aglow with wonder that on waking seems
But broken gleams.

So let my spirit sleep the sleep of death:
Close, eyes; be idle, hands; and silent, breath!
Wait what It saith!

THE GOD OF THE GULLS

O THE God of the gulls goes straight and swift,
Whatever winds may be:
Straight he goes, and swift he goes,
Over the secret sea.

For the God of the gulls has a restless heart
That will not let him be:
By day and by night it urges him
With the urge of eternity.

Yet the tireless God of the tireless gulls
Forgetteth not his own:
Out of his bosom booms a cry,—
Wave-echoed, tempest-blown;

And the birds beat down to the sheltering shrouds,
Or gather upon the hull;
Safely they sail on the breast of the giant,—
The strong or the young sea-gull.

But the storm dies down, and the clouds dissolve,
And out on the sunlit sea
Wheel and circle the white-feathered folk,
Playing right merrily.

Then their God laughs kindly, and tosses food
To the eager-whirling things;—
A rapturous dive of the sea-children
With the sun on their glistening wings!

O the God of the gulls goes straight and swift,
Whatever winds may be:
Straight he goes, and swift he goes,
Over the secret sea.

A NIGHT ON THE SAINT LAWRENCE

(RIMOUSKI)

IF the world were itself alone,—mere mountains and
seas and cities,
Performing each its function, yielding no further
service,
There might not be God.

But there is Beauty also, and Beauty is very God.

Sky-glory, sea-glory, glory of rocky headland,—
The vivid tinge of the orange-tawn outspreading
from the sunset,
Vivid yet soft, a velvet dream-fire, glowing with opal
magic,
Pulsing with silent passion . . . imperceptibly
paling . . .
For fifty golden minutes creating a saffron sea,
A ship of emprise romantic, a shore of haloed har-
bours!

In the shoulder of the sky a single star is shining,
While from the foreground answers the tiny beam of
a lighthouse.

Too tremulous the scene: soon it has faded, vanished,
And steel-blue darkness comes, and a shudder as of
coldness.

After a long moment, a quiet waiting,—
To the north a great warm sleepy light arises:
The full moon swimming up from the wet and wan
horizon,
With worshipful wave-satellites weaving her path be-
fore her!

Alas! such pictures stay not,—pass, yet can perish
never;
For them supremely exist the sky and the sea and
the mountains,
As parts in a master-drama.

O God, how Thy glory makes the human spirit
drunken
With awful joy and wonder!
Thy word, unwritten, so may we read, behold Thy
face effulgent,
Thou brooding, loving Artist, whose holiest name is
Beauty.

GOD'S EYES

Marie : FATHER, what colour are God's eyes?

Father : Guess, sweetheart. You shall have three tries.

Marie : Then are they blue?

Father : Yes, bluer far
Than where the highest heavens are.

Marie : I cannot think of eyes so blue.

Father : God's eyes are brown.

Marie : Father, but you
Told me just now my guess was true.

Father : Still, sweetheart, not the earthy loam
Is brown as are His eyes, the home
Of russet, sepia, and chrome.

Marie : Father, I do not understand.

Father : God's eyes are golden, dear; when land
And sea are bathed in sunset glow,
And holiness seems brooding low,
The eyes of God are there also;
And when the first faint violet hue

Steals tremblingly the petals through
Till its full life is pulsing new,
The flower lifts those eyes to you.
When in the woods the drooping day
Watches the whirling leaves at play,
Then well we wit God's eyes are gray;
And, sweetheart, when each quiet night
You fold your hands so sure and tight,
And, with your fresh young soul alight,
Tell to the Father every mite,
Those all-seeing eyes are purest white.

Marie : Is it all true as true can be?

Father : I would not tease you, small Marie!
Nay, you must watch and see, dear maid,
When next the bow in heaven is laid,
God's eyes change slow from shade to shade.

TO A BUTTERFLY

BUTTERFLY, butterfly,
Flutter by,
Over and under and over,
Flitting from lily to clover,
Restless, unsatisfied rover!
What is it thou dost hunger after
That is not now, yet is eternally to be—
Sunshine and the warm sun-laughter
Touching into glory the waving wings of thee?
Frail insect, mad-possessed
Of quenchless, fruitless quest,
Patiently brooding the loneliest leaf,
Searching the silentest flower,
Placing the hills and the meadows in fief,
Scorning no spot of the arid or arable,
Questing for aye in thy life of an hour,—
Butterfly, butterfly,
Utter thy parable!

Tireless discoverer,
Voyager vagrant,
Hopefullest hoverer,
Lured by the fragrant;
Ruthless deserter of grapes and camellias,
Yearning to, turning from, countless Ophelias,—

Urged on by the vision
Of wonder supernal,
To autumn's decision
Referring the vernal;
All to see, *all* to see:
Of the Past the history,
Of the Last the mystery;
For brief engrossing moments joying in the real,
Yet swift again to know the sting of the ideal;
Wary of Nature's benison,
(In the inmost heart of thee the pang, the sting!)
Of this demesne no denizen,
No captive, but an age-appointed Thing!

Butterfly, can nothing win thee into rest,—
No petal here or yonder? . . .
Nay, flutter by, contentless, as is best,—
While with thee I wander!

LYRICS OF THE RAIL

I. THE SCORNFUL TOWN

THE green fields waver, break a space
To black and white and gray,—
Men standing, staring in a place
That quickly dies away;—
And swift again on left and right
The living, slipping green.
What *was* that black and gray and white?—
A phantom never seen!

II. THE CANYON

The sky withdraws, the cutting narrows,
A vague intention fills the air;
Still past the window stream the arrows
Of light and darkness, everywhere.

A moment, and the battlers waver;—
Another, and the night has won;
Into the mountain's dark disfavour
Plunges the train at set of sun.

III. THE SLEEPING-CAR

The land is silent, and the moon
Is slowly rising; the long jar
Of wheels on rails all afternoon
Is past, and stars and stillness are.

As from the darkness of the couch
I turn my wakeful eyes, and gaze
Thro' lonely panes, I could avouch
That earth and man, and nights and days,

Are lost and gained, that all are one:
The low-heard speeding of the train,
The cloud-swept moon, the stars that run,
The heart's assumptions and its pain.

TEMPEST-TOST

IN a flash the rain roars down,
Tearing a way to the ground
With a splashing, unmusical sound,
With a quivering, quick rebound,—
Striking each dusty town
Into a gloom of the flood,
Into a chill of the blood,
At the ravenous roar of the rain.

The thunder struggles for breath,
Beaten with moanings of ire,
Mad with a rebel desire,—
Lightning, its heart of fire,
Goads it to desperate death,—
Fear follows everywhere,
On the earth and the sea and the air,
Forebodings of terror and pain.

Then the voice of the sea outcries:—
“All my waves have in anger arisen,
Scorning my bosom a prison,
Lashing me while I listen
To the prayer as of one who dies:
‘O Infinite Love, come thou,
Save me and pilot me now!’
And straight there is silence again.”

Low earth-murmurs kindle and loom,
And its secrets have thickened the sky,
Till it sweeps them before the fierce eye
Of the hurricane hurrying by.
Clash all the drivings of doom,—
Storm! and the world in collapse,—
Despair! were it not that perhaps
There 's a whispering promise-refrain.

IV.

HAMLET

HE would see all, this thinker! He would see
The lure of life, the deep of mystery;—
He sees, and he is silent: Love and Hate
Sink into nothing while he stares at Fate.

A GRACE BEFORE SHAKESPEARE

("I own that I am disposed to say grace upon twenty other occasions in the course of the day besides my dinner. I want a form for setting out upon a pleasant walk, for a moonlight ramble, for a friendly meeting, or a solved problem. Why have we none for books, those spiritual repasts—a grace before Milton—a grace before Shakespeare—a devotional exercise proper to be read before reading *The Faerie Queene*?"—Charles Lamb: *Essays of Elia*.)

WEARY and wishful of the woods, we hear
The whispers of the leaves of Arden stealing
Down the dull ways of sense with "Better cheer!"
Or strain to catch a sweet and tiny pealing—
The elfin bells of Puck and all his line,
And watch the lights of springtide clearer growing,
And smell the violet and the eglantine,
In love with Love, and fun and frolic flowing.
Darken our day-dreams, and the air strikes chill,
And shadows huge and formless go a-glooming,
And moments are when Life and Death stand still
Before Lord Fate's inexorable dooming;—
Shakespeare, or murmuring night or morning song,
Always thyself abideth, calm and strong!

TO SHAKESPEARE'S MOTHER

DID he, madonna, on thy bosom turning,
Look in thy woman-eyes and see soft fires
Glowing and melting, passioning and yearning,
Lit with the mother-light of far desires?
O did he fix his still regard upon them,
Learning their meanings manifold and strange,
Climbing with wonder up to count and con them
Ere they should vanish and the moment change?

The visions that thy soul revealed him then,
Though thou hast died, madonna, may never die:
They dwell eternal in pure Imogen,
Cordelia's truth and Desdemona's sigh,
Rosalind's Arden, Miranda's island wave,
Girlish Ophelia's love, and Juliet's grave.

TO A CLASS IN SHAKESPEARE

Gossip of swains befooled by fairy charm,
With wordy riots of buffoon and clown,
And ripples of light laughter floating down,—
Mischief and Mirth and Music arm in arm;
Or shadows of the nightfall, soul-alarm
And soul-despair, Fate's ever-fixéd frown,
And man's high-hearted struggle lest he drown
Under the rising waves of wrong and harm;

These spirit-symbols have we heard and seen,
Treading alike the meadows and the blind
And labyrinthine windings long and dim;
Danced have we and stood doubtful, yet have been
As those that think the better of their kind
Because they've walked together and with
him.

TO HARRIET SHELLEY

AS some blithe schooner sailing on the breast
Of ocean, thrilled by the sheer voyaging,
Heedless that wave and wind must hourly bring
Her near and nearer to the haven-rest;—
Yard-arms akimbo, carelessness confest,
Dancing through worlds of water, white of wing
And light of heart;—finds harbour, wondering
Where now the roar, the rigour and the zest;

Creature of chance, so was it with thy life,
Who knew not, hardly loved, the element
Upbearing thee, but, glad to be a wife,
Took little thought *whither* the compass bent,—
Crossing the troubled deep of Shelley's spirit,
The silent Dark thereafter to inherit!

TO JOHN KEATS

(In one of those mental voyages into the past which precede death, Keats had told Severn that he thought "the intensest pleasure he had received in life was in watching the growth of flowers," and another time, after lying a while quite still, he murmured: "I feel the flowers growing over me."—*Lord Houghton's Memoir.*)

"SEVERN, I feel the flowers o'er me grow."
They grow, loved boy,—the daisies drenched with
dew,
Pale sentries of the Sleep that silenced you;
And violets, that the poet-password know—
Your soul to theirs gave whisper long ago:
In all that Roman garden none with hue
More bright; and many a clovered avenue,
Sweet flower-forests waving to and fro.

And every plant in that so holy place
Yearns to your lyréd grave, and all that earth
Bears wheresoever into blossoming;
And every seed of honour, ruth, and grace
Quickens when buried there, and comes to birth,
Greening above you in eternal Spring.

TO GEORGE BORROW

(Lavengro.)

NO "book," but your own heart, was written, Borrow,
When pen and paper met,—that heart of hope
And havoc, English pride and world-wide sorrow;
Here on a breathless page two rascals cope,
Or here the Roman gypsy greets us smiling,
True to his tribe's inscrutable constraint;
That picture fades, and Murtagh moves beguiling,
Or Belle the bold, or Winifred the saint;
Down to Lavengro's dingle when we go
We go down also into melancholy,
And wrestle through the night with nameless woe,
With human horror and eternal folly.
O brood, or laugh, or rage from Thames to Tiber,—
Knight of the ancient ruth and fearless fibre!

PIPPA AND HER FLOWERS

"She stoops to pick my double heartsease. . . ."—*Morn.*

"Even my lily's asleep, I vow:
Wake up—here's a friend I've plucked you!
Call this flower a heartsease now!" —*Night.*
—*Pippa Passes.*

HER flowers? The martagon flame-lily glowing,
And heartsease, dreaming happiness always,—
The Trinity-of-Pippa, she and they!
Dawn! and the heartsease in the valley blowing,
And gladness in a girl's young soul o'erflowing:
Sings she a welcome to her Holiday,
Teases and tends her lily, laughing gay,—
Then up and out her eager feet are going.

Think, friend of mine, that little figure bending
To pluck the heartsease for her lily lonely,
That each may love the other at day's ending,
Shall live when you and I are shadows only;
The childlike kindness in that simple deed
Shames into silence Death's despairful creed.

“STORM STILL”

DRENCHING the moors, and through the forest-
glooms,
While thunder booms,
The rain is roaring;
With lightning-glares the heavens shiver,
The giant branches thrash and quiver,
The birds go scudding, screaming, soaring.

For Love, for Love is dead and gone for aye,
So all things say,—
Yea, all things, all things,—
While with fixed eyes and arms upraised in power
An old mad king hurries the fatal hour
With cries, defiances and callings.

Storm still, storm ever, until the day is done,
And, one by one,
The stars are shining:
Though Love be dead, see Love's wan ghost ap-
pearing,
And through the silent Dark her pathway clearing,
On bruised and baffled Lear declining!

TO THE FRIENDLIEST OF POETS

CHAUCER, kind heart, who with the score and ten
Laughed your long way through Kent's a-green-
ing fields,
So mild, my gentleman! yet your arch pen
Its ancient freshness yields;

Life was to you no dreary heaviness,
No, nor a fretting puzzle for the mind;
You saw the best and worst, and both would bless,
For both were of mankind.

The "smale fowles" lusty would be singing,
The summoner his "stif burdoun" would bear,
But in your poet-soul the music ringing
Was sure the sweetest there.

Maister of words, and lover of the human,
Refresh us ever with your vernal prime;
A tonic draught for us, or man or woman—
Your frank and winsome rhyme!

TO MY LORD VERULAM

"If parts allure thee, think how Bacon shin'd,
The wisest, brightest, meanest of mankind!"

—Pope: *Essay on Man*.

"OF mankind meanest!" Out upon the pen
That dared malign you, good my lord, so
grossly,—
A little soul, that stooped his lowest then,
With formal praise to mingle blame morosely,
At courtly honour sneering!

Your steady conscience those may read that run,
Maugre a faithless king and "raskall rabble;"
Your life-truth and your word-truth were as one;—
The empty man is known by empty babble:
The wise can wait a hearing.

The hand that wrote of friendship, and the heart
That Matthews loved, and Rawley, were not
strange;
The eloquences of your lordly art
Had in your bosom first their ample range,
Their high-bred spirits rearing.

Thinker profound and patient, labourer true
Amid the turmoil of an eager time,—
Not without fault, yet blameless—we by you
Move cheerlier forward to the golden prime,
The way more sure appearing.

TO MASTER HENRY FIELDING

I' FAITH, good Hal, you have a saucy wit,
You sober-smiling magistrate of modes,
And yet, I swear, I like the way of it,
Save when, of course, it mocks *my* social codes
And private peccadilloes.

And what a brave old Bull you are, my Fielding,
And how you tear and toss the crimson rags
Of "low" and "law," and how you scorn the yield-
ing
To critics who, unhorsed, their saddle-bags
Must use in lieu of pillows.

They 're left to brood their sins, whilst you, im-
patient,
Like Ocean old, to change the figure here,
With soul as free as that of any ancient,
And sentences a trifle mixed, I fear,
Sweep on in lofty billows.

Roguish as Puck, and now benign as Brahma,
Give us to drink from out your generous glass,
Seer and lover of the human drama,
Wisdom and cheer through all the way we pass
From storks to weeds and willows!

TO MISS JANE AUSTEN

MADAM, I must express respectful wonder
At your delightful novels, penned despite
Your unawareness of the proper thunder
Employed by those professionals who write
For present generations.

You've minor merits; we have—Miss Corelli—
She's in "Who's Who" and so is Mistress Ward;
Your heroines are *bourgeoise* Liz or Nellie—
Such homely English hearts you seem to hoard,
Untoned by foreign nations.

Your canvas, too, is very small and shrinking—
You've said as much yourself—and yet you
smile,
Content with gentle raillery, not thinking
Of what you *ought* to do—belabour guile
With stageable gyrations.

Indeed, dear Madam Jane, the eagle wheeling,
The vulture tearing, e'en the owl sedate,
Or brooding hen,—such modern modes of feeling
Are foreign to you, I regret to state
(With mental reservations).

So mild and unobtrusive seems your pleasure
It minds us rather of the humming-bird,
Sipping and skimming to a patterned measure,
Within an ordered park of way and word,
 'Mid Spring's felicitations.

It's true, of course, that you amused Sir Walter,
Lewes, Macaulay, and a number more,
But fashions change, Miss Austen, *have* to alter,—
Your glowworm humour now is ancient lore,
 Barren of imitations.

In short, although we like you still extremely,
It's not the thing to read you nowadays;
If only you had been a bit unseemly
In style, or bold of plot, why then our praise
 Might still perform oblations.

So good-bye, Madam; we must leave behind us
Your wit and wisdom, for no more they'll do:
We must progress, the publishers remind us—
This chat was pleasant, but it means—adieu!—
 Our people are creations.

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